



**A large portion of the Kendall Square rooftop garden was fenced off as of Thursday.** Part of the garden will be replaced by a two-story connector building occupied by Google. The approval process for the connector has been quite controversial, with the City Council approving the work only after believing the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority had done so, though in fact the Authority had no quorum at the time. Last week, CRA Executive Director Joseph Tulumieri resigned amidst questions about his salary and compensation. City Manager Robert W. Healy has appointed Susan Glazer from the city's Community Development department to head up the CRA in the interim. Both Tulumieri and administrative assistant Tracy Mercer, who also resigned last week, did not respond to requests for comment.

HO YIN AU

# Junot Diaz, MacArthur Grant winner

*Writing professor wins  
prize for talent in fiction*

**By Kath Xu**  
STAFF REPORTER

Often overshadowed by its engineering and science counterparts, the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) at MIT has been called the “hidden jewel” of the Institute. Now, the SHASS has one more award to add to its list of accolades. On Oct. 2, the MacArthur Foundation announced that it had selected MIT professor Junot Diaz to receive a MacArthur Fellowship for his outstanding talent in fiction writing. The foundation awards about 20 so-called “Genius Grants” each year, which each come with \$500,000 of no-strings-attached prize money in installments over five years.

In an email interview with *The Tech*, Junot Diaz stated that the prestigious award essentially meant two things for him. “It’s a tremendous honor for my community, which is never honored enough,” he said, referring to the Latino-American community in which he grew up. “And for five years

**Diaz, Page 13**

## IN SHORT

**Add date is today!** Make sure you get your forms in by 5 p.m.!

**The UA Fall Festival comedy show is today at 8 p.m. in La Sala Puer-to Rico.** See comedians Michael Ian Black and Hannibal Buress! \$10 for MIT students, tickets are available at the door.

**The second forum hosted by the Presidential Transition Advisory Cabinet is Wed., Oct. 10 from 5 - 7 p.m. in 32-144.** They want student input, go be heard!

**Senior portraits for the Technique are next week!** Monday - Friday in W20-451. Check your email for further details.

**Balfour will be on campus Wed. and Thurs. from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** for all of your brass rat servicing needs.

**Splash teacher registration has been extended to Tues. October 8.** Check <http://esp.mit.edu> for more details.

**Memorial Drive will be closed from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Mon.** due to the Tufts 10K road race.

**Startup bootcamp**, a free event featuring talks by a number of start-up founders, begins Oct. 8 at 9 a.m.

**The Tech will not publish this coming Tuesday due to the Columbus Day holiday.** Classes resume on Wednesday. Enjoy the long weekend!

**Send news information and tips to [news@tech.mit.edu](mailto:news@tech.mit.edu).**

# Do students care about the election?

*MIT students talk about why their peers should care about politics*

**By Austin Hess**  
STAFF REPORTER

With just a month to go before the presidential election on November 6, MIT students are all talking politics. Or are they? In light of the first presidential debate, how do students feel about voting, elections, and politics in general this year?

On Wednesday night, students gathered in various places across campus to watch the first round of the presidential debate. The Forum, an MIT student group that facilitates discussions of political issues, sponsored one viewing event in the Stata Center. Before the debate, the organizers informally polled the attendees. Of the forty people there, a solid majority identified as being Obama supporters, while only two sided with Romney. When asked for what they were hoping to learn from the domestic policy-focused debate, common responses included finding out more details about Romney's policies and changes Obama would make to his economic approach if reelected. Additionally, almost everyone in the room answered that they were registered and planning to vote. Students believed this high level of interest may have been due to the self-selecting nature of a group watching a political debate.

## Why should MIT students care about politics?

“Freshmen come to MIT hoping to change the world, and to do that we need to understand what’s going on,” Naren P. Tallapragada ‘13 said, “Politics is the art of convincing

people that your great idea is the one worth following.”

Indeed, many believe that MIT students should care about politics. According to Caroline B. Shinkle ‘15, leader of the MIT College Republicans, “MIT students do care about politics. However, the rigor of the MIT experience makes it less likely for mass student activism on

campus.”

“Even though politics may not always be at the top of the mind, MIT students in general are tuned into the key issues and are more than willing to share their opinions,” she said. Shinkle suggested that students should care because “Most students are focused on forging a successful career after MIT or graduate school.

They know that without a vibrant economy their chances of success are severely diminished. It comes down to which candidate has the vision, the background, and the plan to create that kind of environment.”

While those in politically oriented clubs have a strong political

**Politics, Page 12**



EMILY KELLISON-LINN—THE TECH

**Students prepare to watch the presidential debate on Wednesday night in the Stata Center** during an event hosted by The Forum, MIT's political discussion group, in collaboration with MIT College Democrats and MIT College Republicans. Members of The Forum led discussions before and after the debate.

## A VISION FOR EDX?

MIT's online learning venture lacks a key vision, and the process to achieve one.  
**EDITORIAL, p. 4**

## CHILDCARE AT MIT

Grad students and postdocs need daycare spots too. **OPINION, p. 5**

## HUMILITY

A response to the arrogance of freshmen. **OPINION, p. 4**



## NFL PREDICTIONS

What's going on during week five?  
**SPORTS, p. 16**

## TRIAL OF THE CLONE

Zach Weinersmith's new choose your own adventure book!  
**ARTS, p. 14**

## SECTIONS

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Arts . . . . . 14  
Sports . . . . . 16















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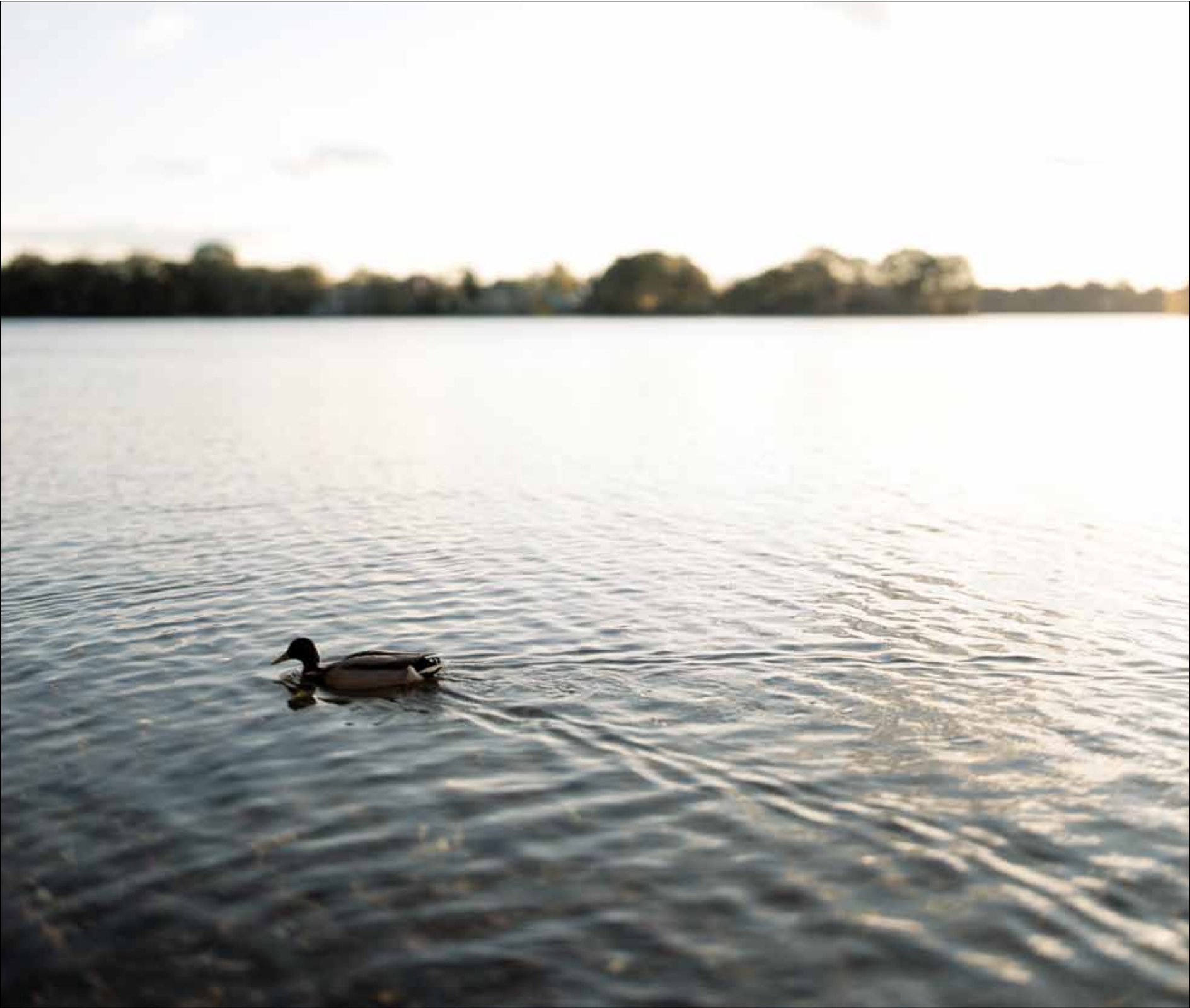


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A duck seeks a willow shaded shore in the setting autumn sun at Spy Pond in Somerville.

CHRISTOPHER A. MAYNOR—THE TECH

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The book cover for 'The 86% Solution' by Vijay Mahajan. It features a world map with a focus on developing regions, and the title 'The 86% SOLUTION' in large, bold letters. The subtitle 'How to Succeed in the 21st Century' is also visible.





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# Why students should care about politics

Many attend presidential debate watching parties

Politics, from Page 1

opinions, what about the average student? Rebecca Zhang '15 pointed out, "The work we do is mostly science oriented, but policies are what gets it put into practice," citing her interest in energy as an example. Will Drevo '13 said that participating in politics was impor-tant even if solely for the purpose of "keeping politics out of the way of innovation, not the other way around." While most people agreed there is a general interest in pol-itics in the student body, Rishabh Kabra '14 noted that it is less prevalent than at other elite universities. "I have a class at Har-vard and they have political discussions pretty often. We're not the type of environment where people go out of their way to talk about politics. Instead, we have a laid back awareness." Kabra also noted that the student body seemed mostly liberal. Abbey G. Bethel '14 confirmed this, but added, "I don't feel that the majority is overwhelming." In 2010, *The Tech's* politics survey found that 48 percent of MIT students felt the Democratic Party best shared their views, while only 9 percent identified with Republicans. For those who are planning to vote, the issue of where to register came up. Zhang registered to vote in Pennsylvania, reasoning, "Voting in Massachusetts won't really affect any-thing because it will always vote for the Democrat, but Penn-sylvania is a swing state." When asked about their efforts in registering MIT students, members of Democratic Senate candidate Elizabeth Warren's campaign representatives on campus declined official com-ment on short notice, but they pointed out that until October 17, MIT students can still register to vote every day in Lobby 10 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. using their MIT address.

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### Solution to Crossword

from page 10

S	I	R	I	S	P	S	F	O	S	S	E
O	V	E	N	N	E	A	T	A	M	W	A
B	A	I	T	F	E	T	A	I	N	A	N
E	N	G	A	G	E	M	E	N	T	R	I
R	A	N	C	O	R	D	E	W			
				T	E	N	N	I	S	R	A
D	A	Y	S	O	O	N	M	Y	H	E	R
A	L	E	S	W	T	S	I	N	I	T	
M	A	L	I	B	U	R	O	T	S	O	N
E	S	P	R	E	S	S	O	S	H	O	T
				A	S	P		I	M	A	G
P	R	O	G	R	E	S	S	R	E	P	O
S	E	O	U	L	O	P	S	T	O	N	E
A	R	O	S	E	L	S	A	T	A	S	I
T	U	F	T	S	S	O	N	Y	P	E	E

### Solution to Techdoku

from page 10

4	6	5	1	2	3
5	1	6	2	3	4
1	3	2	4	5	6
6	2	1	3	4	5
3	5	4	6	1	2
2	4	3	5	6	1

### Solution to Sudoku

from page 10

1	6	8	3	9	4	2	5	7
9	2	3	6	5	7	1	8	4
5	4	7	2	1	8	3	6	9
6	8	9	4	7	1	5	3	2
2	5	4	8	6	3	7	9	1
7	3	1	5	2	9	8	4	6
8	9	2	7	4	5	6	1	3
3	1	6	9	8	2	4	7	5
4	7	5	1	3	6	9	2	8

# What are YOU doing during IAP?

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# Writing professor wins ‘Genius Grant’

*Junot Diaz newest MacArthur fellow*

Diaz, from Page 1

[the award represents] the freedom to write, which for someone with a full-time job is no small thing.”

The MacArthur Fellowship places heavy emphasis on creativity in selecting recipients. Individuals must be nominated for this award in order to be considered. According to the MacArthur Foundation website, the monetary award is meant to allow its recipients to pursue their ideas freely when they otherwise might not have that luxury.

Junot Diaz is currently the Rudge and Nancy Allen Professor of Writing in Writing and Humanistic Studies. His published works include an anthology of short stories called *Drown* (1996) and a novel titled *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). Diaz read an excerpt from his most recent collection of stories, *This Is How You Lose Her*, in the Stata Center on Sept. 27.

This isn’t the first time Diaz has won a major award. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award in 2008, and appeared on many best-seller lists.

Still, Diaz said that he “never imagined winning a MacArthur.”

“My imagination doesn’t run in that direction,” said Diaz. “When I was told, it was like one of those little BASIC programs we used to mess with when we were kids.

10 Stunned  
20 Go to 10  
RUN”

Junot Diaz was born in the Dominican Republic, but grew up in New Jersey. In his works, he often

likes to explore the challenges facing an immigrant in a new country, drawing upon his own experiences. Yunior, a character who often recurs in his works, is a Dominican-American who is also from New Jersey.

“I grew up wanting always to be in books and later, when I was a teenager, wanting to be an artist,” said Diaz. “Only natural I’d become a writer, given those preconditions.”

Before joining the faculty at MIT, he received his B.A. from Rutgers University and an M.F.A. from Cornell University.

Diaz explained, “A job at one of the greatest schools in the world is hard to turn down. But I stayed for the brilliant students. I’ve been to a lot of schools and my students here have no equal. They are nuts half the time, sure, but they are amazing almost all the time.”

According to Diaz, despite attending a heavily technical school, MIT students don’t seem to approach writing any differently from other students.

“They have less time for it because of their other classes,” he said. “It’s hard to generalize, but on average, like many select college students, my MIT youth tend not to think of the arts as central to their career paths. I’m here to argue the opposite.”

As both a professor and an award-winning novelist who was once a college student, too, Diaz has some advice for aspiring writers: “Read. And focus on being an artist; we have way too many entertainers.”

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# Engineering miracles and unsung heroes: A guide to Mars exploration

**By Roberto Perez-Franco**  
*STAFF WRITER*

By now you must have heard about Curiosity, NASA's latest robotic ambassador to Mars. It has been making headlines for weeks, first with its nail-biting landing sequence, fit for a sci-fi movie, and more recently with its discovery of evidence of streaming water in the Martian past. Curiosity is the stuff geeks dream about: a largely autonomous laboratory on wheels, the size of a small car and loaded to the brim with the most sophisticated science equipment ever sent to another world.

Pyle's book is mostly a thorough and enthralling retelling of the remarkable history of human exploration of the red planet, from the '60s to the present. A few editorial mishaps notwithstanding, *Destination Mars* is a remarkable achievement, and a truly fascinating read.

behind it, works like a charm.

We learn first about the Mariner missions that NASA launched between the mid-1960s and the early 1970s, and then more about the next generation of missions, the Vikings. Pyle then takes us through the twenty years of stagnation in Mars exploration, NASA's return to Mars with the Mars Global Surveyor in the early '90s, and the first rover, Sojourner, in the late '90s. Finally, Pyle reviews the more sophisticated missions of the new millennium, including orbiters such as the Mars Express, the Mars Odyssey, and the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter; a polar, lander, the Mars Phoenix; and of course the rovers Spirit and Opportunity, both of which delivered beyond expectations.

★★★★★

## By Rod Pyle

Prometheus Books

## September 2012

may look.

## BOOK REVIEW

# Choose your own adventure, college edition

**By Steve Sullivan**

*STAFF WRITER*

Many of us have fond memories of time we spent in our younger years thumbing through choose-your-own-adventure books. These novels, now known as gamebooks, were exciting because the reader was responsible for the choices the character made and could spend time exploring different choices and story paths. Zach Weinersmith, creator of popular web comic Saturday Morning Breakfast Cereal (SMBC), recreates and innovates upon this magic for an older (though not necessarily more mature) audience in the spacefaring adventure *Trial of the Clone*.

Weinersmith uses role-playing elements to make an interactive game book that gives each read-through a very unique feel. Once the hilariously sad history of my unattractive clone character was laid out, I entered the Silene Monastery, a Jedi Temple-esque building where monks spend time “amusing tourists and smoking slightly different cultivars of marijuana.” Soon prompted to choose a character class, I showed my MIT

pride by shunning the fighter and medic classes for the engineer class. As an engineer, I would receive bonuses to certain stats and have abilities that let me advance down different story paths. I was given an Alpha Ray gun that I used to subdue some kids and their overbearing mothers and steal their attention-enhancing drugs. By the end of *Trial of the Clone*, I had an entire sheet of paper filled with my stat progression, character-defining aspects, and inventory of usable items. Later, going through the book as a fighter, I had to prove my worthiness to my peers by drinking beer and beheading fellow warriors with my Plasmaster.

Upon graduating the Monastery, I arrived at the end of the first act and gained two points to my Wits stat for being an engineer. The book is broken into five such acts. I would need to win battles of brains, brawn, and likability in order to progress through the story; dying would reset me to the start of my current act. Physical fights consisted of trading blows with opponents like soldiers or exotic monsters, while a battle of wits or charisma might involve repair-

ing a spaceship or trying to talk someone out of killing you.

The book really shines by presenting a huge variety of humorous situations for the character to encounter; one minute my character was the subject of a government lab experiment and the next, I was in a temple fighting a statue of Jesus Christ riding a lizard. However, the difficulty did become an issue at times. I attempted multiple times to get through Act 3 as an engineer, but my low fighting ability served me poorly in the numerous battles and I gave up. Going back through *Trial of the Clone* as a bloodthirsty fighter was easier, as physical conflicts ended quickly and most fights of wits and charisma could be won with luck (the book augments fights with stat bonuses that are determined by flipping to a random page). I felt like these battles of wits and charisma, as well as the inventory and character aspects, ended up underdeveloped.

Fans of SMBC will find plenty to love in the humor of *Trial of the Clone*. Dirty jokes about penis size and pornography are interspersed with more intellectual jabs at academia and popular culture. That said, the

## Trial of the Clone

**By Zach Weinersmith**

## Breadpig

October 2012

book's main source of humor might be the shame it heaps upon the main character. Despite your choice-making abilities, you are unable to prevent the protagonist from producing countless bad puns and soiling himself constantly.

*Trial of the Clone* began as a Kickstarter campaign that was made successful by Weinersmith's huge fan base. Weinersmith proves he's worthy of such support by crafting a funny, spontaneous, and culturally offensive adventure that changes every time you read it. If you want to read a new, interactive spin on the choose-your-own adventure story, or just enjoy Weinersmith's style of humor, I would recommend picking this one up.

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# Got Something to Say?



The collage features several newspaper clippings from The Tech. The top left clipping is titled "Dining ignites campus" with the sub-headline "Despite loud opposition, new plan s" and is by Maggie Lloyd, Associate News Editor. It discusses the House Dining Plan. To its right is a clipping titled "Former varsity sports, profiled" with the sub-headline "Money not the only problem". Below the dining plan article is a clipping titled "What's down with Town" with the sub-headline "Greening, MIT 150, real estate discuss". To the right of that is a clipping titled "Two fraternities" with the sub-headline "PBE suspended for four". The collage also includes a small photo of two students and a clipping titled "Established" with a logo.

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